

THE ISLAND

Board of Ed says schools chancellor needs improvement

■ Island representative releases report on Rudy Crew that was compiled by members

By MARJORIE HACK
ADVANCE STAFF WRITER

Members of the Board of Education, led by Staten Island representative Jerry Cammarata, yesterday issued a public report card on Schools Chancellor Rudy Crew, and the consensus was a no-nonsense "needs improvement."

The report, which has been in the making since January and under wraps since late last month, was officially released by Cammarata at a previously scheduled business meeting in Board of Education headquarters in Brooklyn. Cammarata served as chairman of the committee that conducted the evaluation.

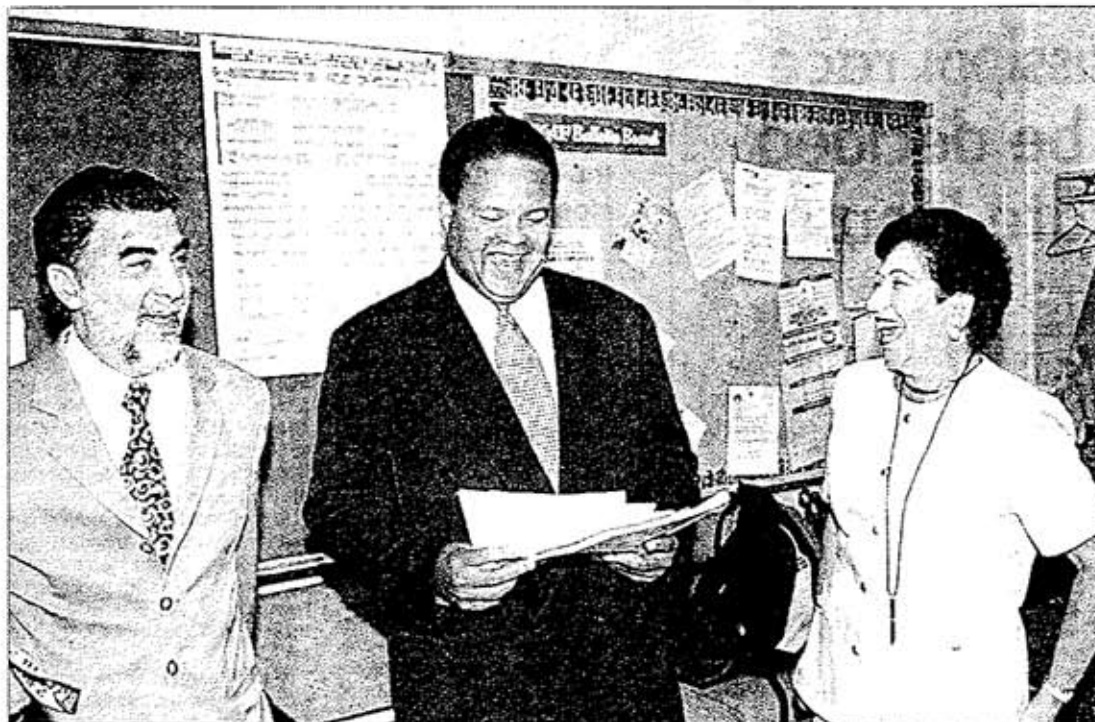
The report comes as Crew is considering whether he wants to stay on as boss of the nation's largest city school system.

Board members are not dissatisfied with Crew's performance since he assumed the post in October 1995. But they are eager to see the payoff for implementing tough initiatives like higher performance standards, ending the board's long-standing policy of social promotion and returning control of local principals and administrators to the central office.

"On the whole, the chancellor has brought to the table of the Board of Education an enormous confidence in vision and the ability to motivate the political establishment from Albany to New York City in order to create a legal machine to move the educational process ... Where he has had less than a stellar capacity at the board is in his ability to manage the system well in order for his vision to become a reality," said Cammarata.

Board of Education president William Thompson called the document "a realistic reflection." He said the evaluation was basically positive, but that "a few things need improvement."

Despite the upbeat wording of the report, Noreen Connell, execu-



ADVANCE PHOTO ■ ROB SOLLETT

Schools Chancellor Rudy Crew, center, is shown during a 1998 visit to PS 13. With him is Jerry Cammarata, Staten Island representative to the Board of Education; and Marcia Gaor, principal of the Rosebank school.

tive director of the Educational Priorities Panel, a well-respected city schools watchdog group, fears Crew could walk away — literally — with the wrong message.

"Continuity is very important," said Ms. Connell, adding that she does not favor the city's current "revolving-door" policy of replacing chancellors who don't instantly perform miracles. "We

need a consistent structure and direction for a while."

Ms. Connell said she would like Crew to remain in his post. She said that, barring a significant uptick in funding and resources, change occurs incrementally.

"There has been improvement, but it will take a while for that improvement to show. This is a tremendous task. Actually, New York

City is one of the better urban public school systems. This is the wrong time to play these [political] games," she explained.

The report card goes on to urge Crew to "strengthen his direct control" and implement "a comprehensive professional development program for teachers and administrators."

It also calls on the chancellor to

beef up meaningful parent involvement, finish turning over school security to the city Police Department and better target resources for special education students as well as low-performing black and Hispanic youngsters.

The Board of Education's public information office said yesterday that the chancellor would not have an official comment on the report.